

SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Sarasota County

NARRATIVE ☐
CONTINUATION ☐

MI ☒
HATE CRIME ☐

INVESTIGATIVE ☐

SUPPLEMENTAL ☐
JUVENILE ☐

CHARACTER OF CASE **Helicopter/Boat Crash**

CASE # **07-75516**

DATE **09/11/07**

TIME **1000**

INCIDENT LOCATION **Gulf Of Mexico/Nokomis**

GRID

ZONE **011**

COMPLAINANT/VICTIM **Sgt. J Jernigan**

RACE **W**

SEX **M**

D.O.B. **N**

ADDRESS **Sarasota**

PHONE #

DATE OCCURRED FROM MONTH **09** DAY **11** YEAR **07** TO MONTH DAY TIME OCCURRED FROM HOUR **10** MIN **00** TO HOUR **10** MIN **33**

E V E N T D A T A	RELATED CASE NUMBER(S)						FORCED ENTRY	0 N/A 1 YES 2 NO	0
	6. LOC TYPE	01 RESIDENCE/SINGLE 02 APARTMENT/CONDO 03 RESIDENCE/OTHER 04 HOTEL/MOTEL 05 CONVENIENCE STORE 06 GAS STATION	07 LIQUOR SALE S 08 BAR/NIGHT CLUB 09 SUPERMARKET 10 DEPT STORE 11 SPECIALTY STORE 12 DRUG STORE/HOSP	13 BANK/FINANCIAL 14 COMMERCIAL/OFFICE 15 INDUSTRIAL/MFG 16 STORAGE 17 GOVT/PUBLIC BLDG 18 SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY	19 JAIL/PRISON 20 RELIGIOUS BLDG 21 AIRPORT 22 BUS/RAIL TERM 23 CONSTR SITE 24 OTHER STRUCTURE	25 PARKING LOT/GARAGE 26 HIGHWAY/ROADWAY 27 PARK/WOODLAND/FIELD 28 LAKE/WATERWAY 29 MOTOR VEHICLE 30 OTHER MOBILE	99 OTHER	28	

On 09/11/07 at approx 1000 hours, while at my residence off-duty, I was notified via cell phone by Deputy Deiter of a helicopter crash in the Gulf of Mexico. Deputy Deiter advised he was enroute from the Osprey area to the department vessel located at Marine Max in Venice. I advised Deputy Deiter I would respond with him and would meet at Marine Max.

Approx three minutes later, I departed my residence and notified communications that I was enroute to the vessel to assist Deputy Deiter. A short time later, Captain Kevin Kenney contacted me by radio and asked my location. I advised him I was enroute to the vessel. Captain Kenney, who was flying the department helicopter, requested I deviate from going to the department vessel and begin traveling north towards Nokomis. Captain Kenney advised he would pick me up in the helicopter and take me to the crash scene. Captain Kenney advised he would deploy me into the water from the helicopter to expedite the rescue of the victims.

I traveled north on US41 when Captain Kenney advised to meet him in a grass field on Albee Road west of US41. I arrived at this location and retrieved an inflatable collar style personal flotation device (PFD) from my vehicle and entered the left rear of the helicopter. Captain Kenney flew out to the crash scene at which time I observed a large "go-fast" style boat in the water with crash debris floating on the water. At this point, I was not able to see victims in the water. Captain Kenney positioned the helicopter to the west of the unoccupied boat and hovered over the water. I opened the left rear door to the helicopter and stepped out onto the landing skids. At approx. 1020 hours, I entered the water from the landing skids and swam to the boat. I climbed up onto the boat and was able to see my immediate surroundings. To the south of the boat, I was able to see and communicate with Bob Teague (boat operator) with victim Thomas Newby. I asked Teague if he had any throwable flotation devices in the boat and he advised he did not.

At this time, Florida Wildlife Commission Officer Tim Erickson arrived at the scene. He dropped his gun belt and jumped into the water to assist Teague with Newby. I reentered the water and deployed my PFD. I swam to Teague and Newby and did an assessment of Newby. He was conscious, breathing and moaning with pain. I laid on my back and made chest rising and falling motion to Captain Kenney to relay Newby's status. While afloat with Teague, Newby and FWC

COPY TO: **Det. Sgt. Brewer**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR

SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Sarasota County

CASE # 07-75516

DATE 09/11/07

M.I. OR NARRATIVE CONTINUATION FORM

Officer Erickson, I noticed Officer Erickson's boat was drifting rapidly to our northeast. I communicated with Officer Erickson that if they were stable, I would swim to his boat and bring it back to them. I did swim to the boat, climbed aboard and operated it back to their location.

While in the FWC boat, I was able to see multiple rescue boats heading in our direction. I relayed this information to Officer Erickson. Upon the next rescue boat arriving, (possibly Venice Police) I asked if they had a backboard for Newby. They advised they did not at which time I directed to victim Copeland (I knew we could not safely lift Newby up and over the high sides of a vessel without either a stokes basket or a backboard). Victim Copeland was now being placed on the rear diving platform of a vessel (possibly USCG Aux vessel). While waiting a short time for another vessel to arrive, boat passenger Jennifer Zuknich swam up to the boat. I pulled Zuknich into the boat and ensure she was not injured. She advised she was fine and only showed signs of being fatigued. At this time, Deputy Deiter arrived with Sgt. Kraayenbrink and Paramedics. They had a backboard to assist in keeping Newby's body stable. They removed the side "dive door" from the Sheriff's Office Donzi vessel and placed the backboard into the water. Newby was placed on the board and removed from the water. They departed from the scene towards Venice Inlet at 1034 hours.

I assisted Officer Erickson back into his vessel as Teague swam to the go-fast vessel. I did a quick interview with Zuknich and learned she and Teague were in the "go-fast" for a photo shoot when the helicopter was flying in front of the boat. She said they were going fast when they were instructed by the helicopter to slow down. She said they slowed down and shortly after she commented to herself about how low the helicopter was getting. She said she asked herself how low the helicopter could go before crashing. At that moment, she saw the helicopter dip and a wall of water erupted in front of them. She said she ducked as Teague operated the boat in a circle. She said she jumped into the water to try to assist the occupants of the helicopter as Teague was calling 9-1-1. She said there were three occupants onboard the helicopter and the two of them in the boat. I called out to Teague and also asked him how many subjects were in the helicopter and he responded three. I then confirmed with rescue personnel on scene that three victims had been recovered from the water in addition to Teague and Zuknich. This was confirmed.

Officer Erickson took a still photograph of the "go-fast" vessel with part of the helicopter skid still affixed to the front of the boat. We stood-by at the crash scene while victims were taken to the Crows Nest where a command post was established with medical personnel and Bayflight were standing by.

Approx twenty minutes later, Deputy Deiter returned to the scene. Zuknich and I were transferred from FWC Officer Erickson's vessel onto his. I was then transferred onto the "go-fast" vessel with Teague. I rode with Teague in the go-fast back to the Crows Nest. During the ride to the Crows Nest I spoke to Teague briefly. He indicated the GPS system on the boat was not operating properly but estimated them traveling approx. 80-83 mph when the crash occurred. He said he saw the wall of water and turned the boat immediately clipping part of the landing skids. He believed they were close to Big Pass and phoned 9-1-1. Upon arrival at the Crows Nest, I communicated with the dock master and requested dockage for the go-fast. We were given access to a secure dock on the west side of the marina. The vessel was secured to the dock and Teague was provided a hose to rinse himself off to remove any possible jet fuel that he may have been exposed to. Detective Speth arrived on the dock and stayed with Teague.

I went to the command post area and obtained medical supplies for a cut on my leg. I then coordinated with CIB and FWC on investigative procedures. I departed from the command post after approx 1 to 2 hours to return home to shower

COPY TO: Det. Sgt. Brewer

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR

SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Sarasota County

CASE # 07-75516

DATE 9/11/07

M.I. OR NARRATIVE CONTINUATION FORM

and change clothes. I returned to the command post and coordinated with Deputy Deiter and the S.U.R.F. Unit on marine assets needed to recover valuable evidentiary items for investigative purposes.

I was present for the first dive by S.U.R.F. members when the transmission to the helicopter was located.

On 9/12/07 I was present from approx. 1100 hours to 1400 hours at the USCG station in Nokomis. At this location, I stood-by and communicated with Deputy Deiter on Marine and S.U.R.F. related needs.

This completes my involvement in this incident.

COPY TO: Det. Sgt. Brewer


SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER


SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR

SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Sarasota County, Florida

NARRATIVE ☐ MI ☐ SUPPLEMENTAL ☒
CONTINUATION ☐ HATE CRIME ☐ INVESTIGATIVE ☐ JUVENILE ☐

CHARACTER OF CASE **Assist Other Agency - Ntsb (Miami Office)**

CASE # **07-75516** DATE **09/11/07** TIME **1000**

INCIDENT LOCATION **Gulf Of Mexico Off Nokomis Fl.** GRID **320A** ZONE **11**

COMPLAINANT/VICTIM **Dep. K. Deiter #849** RACE **W** SEX **M** D.O.B. **N**

ADDRESS **[REDACTED] Blvd. Sarasota Fl.** PHONE # **[REDACTED]**

DATE OCCURRED FROM MONTH DAY YEAR TO MONTH DAY YEAR TIME OCCURRED FROM HOUR MIN TO HOUR MIN

E V E N T D A T A	RELATED CASE NUMBER(S) NTSB-MIA07FA147						5. FORCED ENTRY	6. I/A 1. YES 2. NO	0
	6. LOC TYPE	01 RESIDENCE/SINGLE 02 APARTMENT/CONDO 03 RESIDENCE/OTHER 04 HOTEL/MOTEL 05 CONVENIENCE STORE 06 GAS STATION	07 LIQUOR STORE 08 BAR/NIGHT CLUB 09 SUPERMARKET 10 DEPT STORE 11 SPECIALTY STORE 12 DRUG STORE/HOSP	13 BANK/FINANCIAL 14 COMMERCIAL OFFICE 15 INDUSTRIAL/MEG 16 STORAGE 17 GOVT/PUBLIC BLDG 18 SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY	19 JAIL/PRISON 20 RELIGIOUS BLDG 21 AIRPORT 22 BUS/RAIL 23 CONSTR SITE 24 OTHER STRUCTURE	25 PARKING LOT/GARAGE 26 HIGHWAY/ROADWAY 27 PARK/WOODLAND/FIELD 28 LAKE/WATERWAY 29 MOTOR VEHICLE 30 OTHER MOBILE	99 OTHER	28	

On today's date, I responded to a report of a helicopter crash in the Gulf of Mexico off of Casey Key. It was reported at the time that a racing boat was also involved in the crash. I responded to the Sheriff's Office patrol boat located at Marine Max Marina in Venice and started towards the reported crash. Enroute to the crash, I stopped at the Crow's Nest Restaurant just inside the mouth of the Venice Inlet and picked up Sgt. Gary Kraayenbrink and two paramedics. Once I had them on board, we continued to the crash site.

Upon arrival, several people were in the water. Sgt. J. Jernigan and Officer Tim Erickson of F.W.C. had entered the water to assist a severely injured occupant of the helicopter. Two other victims were being assisted by other rescue personnel. I positioned my patrol boat so that a backboard could be given to Sgt. Jernigan as he assisted the victim. Once the victim was secured on the board, he was assisted into the patrol boat via the side rescue door. Paramedics requested I start a slow return to the Crow's Nest so they could evaluate the victim and determine the extent of his injuries.

While driving the boat slowly through the debris field, I was able to mark numerous waypoints on the GPS. As large pieces of floating debris were retrieved, a separate waypoint was assigned to it. Paramedics eventually requested I expedite our return to land. I returned the patrol boat to the Crow's Nest as quickly as possible and off-loaded the victim to awaiting emergency personnel.

Sgt. Kraayenbrink and I then returned to the crash site to continue the retrieval of evidence. Upon arriving back at the scene, I met up with Sgt. Jernigan who was at the racing boat that was involved in the crash. Also present was a female model that was on the racing boat, who had become a rescuer. She was covered in jet fuel and her skin was turning red. I took her onto my patrol boat and was able to provide her with a fresh water hose. She was able to hose herself off to remove some of the fuel.

COPY TO:

CIB/McHENRY N.T.S.B.

Dep. K. Deiter #849

NAME AND IDENTIFICATION NUMBER OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR

SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Sarasota County

CASE # 07-75516

DATE 09/11/07

M.I. OR NARRATIVE CONTINUATION FORM

We then continued to assess the debris field and retrieve floating items. Again, each time something was recovered, a waypoint was assigned to it. By keeping an east/west search pattern, I was able to determine initial boundaries for the debris field. I then returned the female model to the Crow's Nest so that she could be interviewed by investigators. At this time, Venice Police Department stayed on scene to protect the area.

It was later determined the Sheriff's Dive Team would be called upon to retrieve evidence that had sunken to the bottom. Several divers responded to the Crow's Nest and after conferring with Jose Obregon of the National Transportation Safety Board, it was determined an underwater search would need to be done as soon as possible.

I brought several dive team members to the wreckage area and we began our initial search. There were some starting points from the previously marked debris field, but the main wreckage was difficult to locate. Some items were recovered by divers but due to an impending lightening storm, divers were pulled from the water.

The next morning (9/12/07), divers from both the Sheriff's Office, and the Sarasota Police Department met at the U.S.C.G. Auxiliary building on Casey Key Rd. After conferring with N.T.S.B., it was determined that because the helicopter was actively filming the race boat when it crashed, an emphasis would be placed on the recovery of any and all video/camera equipment. Divers responded back out to the crash site and began three separate searches.

Divers were towed on dive sleds in order to search as much of the bottom as possible. After several hours, divers located the main debris field, approximately 400 yards south of where the engine, and believed point of impact, was located. Here, divers were able to recover several video and still cameras. The cameras were placed into a large bin filled with water and maintained there until turned over to N.T.S.B. In this same area, the instrument panel, as well as the main blade rotor were located. These items were tagged with large floating markers and tied off directly to the wreckage. This was done to assist the salvage company in relocating the debris and bringing them to the surface at a later time. Once the cameras were retrieved, divers now concentrated on recovering wreckage from the bottom. Numerous pieces of debris were brought up to the boats and eventually turned over to N.T.S.B. at the command post.

The following S.U.R.F. Team members were involved in this operation:

Dep. K. Deiter	Det. M. Watson
Dep. J. Strom	Sgt. N. Scully
Dep. F. Burnham	Dep. S. Huber
Dep. M. Binkley	Sgt. S. Osborne

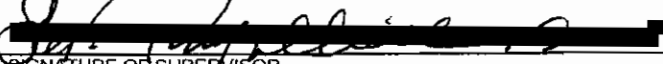
This concludes my involvement in this case at this time.

COPY TO:

CIB

KD
Dep. K. Deiter #849

NAME AND IDENTIFICATION NUMBER OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER


SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT
SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

VICTIMS: Thomas Newby
W/M [REDACTED]
Manhattan Beach, CA

CASE #: 07-75516

Mark Copeland
W/M [REDACTED]
North Carolina

OFFENSE: Assist Other Agency
STATUS: Supplement

DATE TYPED: 09/11/07

PERIOD COVERED BY INVESTIGATION: 09/11/07

DET.: T. Speth #1452 ~~1113~~
mf

SUPV: Sgt. M. Brewer #477

COPY TO: Det. J. McHenry #1443

n.b.

RELATED CASE (S): N/A

09/11/07 - 1044 hours

Detective McHenry #1443 and I arrived at the Crow's Nest Restaurant located at 1968 Tarpon Center Drive. Upon our arrival the victims were already present in the restaurant parking lot. CPR was in progress on two victims while the third victim, later identified as Mark Watters, was receiving medical attention for his injuries. I was advised at 1053 hours that Mark Copeland, who was in the back of Sarasota County Rescue Unit #52, had died. Thomas Newby was transported to Venice Regional Hospital by Rescue #51 while Mark Watters was flown to Bayfront Medical Center by Bayflight. Prior to being transported, Watters stated that they were video taping a boat while flying, felt an impact and were in the water. He also confirmed that he was the pilot of the helicopter and had two occupants. He stated that the boat was occupied by a male and female.

09/11/07 - 1115 hours

I contacted Lorna, the Charge Nurse at Bayfront Medical Center, advising her to keep the victim's clothing as evidence.

09/11/07 - 1130 hours

I observed a red boat arrive at the Crow's Nest boat dock. On board was Robert Teague, the boat captain, and Sgt. J. Jernigan #569. This was identified as the boat involved with this incident. The boat is a 2008 Skater Powerboat, Model 388 manufactured by Douglas Marine

Boat. The hull is red in color with black and white striping. The vessel's name is Pure Platinum. I observed damage to the front left side of the hull. This included scratches and a hole above the water line. The windshield was cracked. Also on the deck in front of and on the windshield was a brown substance which appeared to be fuel from the helicopter.

09/11/07 - 1145 hours

I interviewed Robert J. Teague on the dock near the boat. During the interview, Investigator Larry Gregory of Florida Fish and Wildlife arrived and began to ask questions. Teague stated that the photo shoot today involved a helicopter and six powerboats. The photo shoot was for Powerboat Magazine. Teague is the technical editor and chief test pilot for the magazine. This incident occurred during the last of six consecutive runs. Teague was the boat captain for boat runs # 1, 3 and 6. The boats were staged near the 10th Street boat ramp in Sarasota. Teague and the model Jennifer Zuknick left the boat ramp between 0930 and 0945 hours for the last run. Teague initially took the boat 10 miles to the west then returned and began to travel south toward Venice Beach from the area of Big Pass. Teague stated that Watters was flying from the right side of the helicopter. Still photographer, Tom Newby, was seated behind Watters on the right side. Videographer, Mark Copeland, was seated on the left side. Teague stated that they were in the process of getting a 'head on' shot when the accident occurred. Teague estimated that the boat was traveling between 80-85 mph and between 1-2 miles offshore. The helicopter was approximately 100-150 yards in front of the boat offset to the left about one boat width. Newby was leaning out the door and directing Teague into position with hand signals. The helicopter was 7-10 feet above the water surface. Teague stated that for no apparent reason the helicopter dipped, causing the right skid to contact the water. The helicopter rolled into the water and broke into many pieces. Teague and Zuknick ducked below the dashboard as pieces of the helicopter were flying thru the air. Pieces of the helicopter were striking the boat. Teague turned to the right and circled back to the crash site. He stopped the boat in the debris field and called 9-1-1. Teague and Jennifer jumped into the water to assist the floating victims. Teague initially found Watters who was conscious and clinging to helicopter debris. Teague moved on to Newby who was floating face down and foaming at the mouth. Teague pulled Newby onto a piece of helicopter debris and began CPR. After 10 minutes of CPR Newby responded and began to breathe on his own. Teague began swimming with Newby toward the boat, but the current was taking it to the north. Teague stayed with Newby until the fire department arrived on scene.

Teague stated that a piece of the helicopter skid was impaled in the front port side of the hull. Before removal, the skid was photographed by FWC Officer Erickson #A770. The skid was placed on Erickson's boat and transported to the Crow's Nest dock.

Robert J. Teague

W/M [REDACTED]

6'0" 240 lbs. Blonde hair, Blue eyes

[REDACTED]
Valencia, CA 91355

[REDACTED]
Employed: Teague Custom Marine - Owner
[REDACTED]

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

VICTIM: Thomas Newby
W/M [REDACTED]
Manhattan Beach, CA

CASE #: 07-75516

Mark Copeland
W/M [REDACTED]
North Carolina

Mark Watters
W/M [REDACTED]

OFFENSE: Assist Other Agency

DATE TYPED: 09/14/07

STATUS: SUPPLEMENT

PERIOD COVERED BY INVESTIGATION: 09/11/07 – 09/12/07

DET: R. Brown #1460 *RLB*
po

SUPV: Sgt. Brewer #477
P.D.

COPY TO: Det. McHenry #1443

SUPPLEMENT

ATTACHMENTS: Property Receipt

09/11/07- 1050 hours

Detective Sgt. Brewer contacted me and advised that the District Three Criminal Investigations Bureau was needed for an investigation involving a helicopter crash. It was reported that a helicopter had crashed into the Gulf of Mexico near Nokomis, Florida. I responded to the emergency staging area located in the parking lot of the "Crows Nest Restaurant" located at 1968 Tarpon Ct., which is at the Venice South Jetty.

09/11/07 - 1121 hours

Shortly after my arrival on scene I conducted an audio recorded interview of Officer Erickson #A770 of the Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC). He advised that he has been an officer with FWC for twenty six years and on this date was scheduled to work the Venice area.

Officer Erickson was in the process of launching his patrol boat at Higel Park in Venice when he received a call of a "downed helicopter" from his Communications center. Officer Erickson responded to the reported area, which he estimated was four miles north of the

Venice Jetty and two miles west from the coast line. Upon his arrival to the area Officer Erickson observed two other vessels, believed to be the Coast Guard Auxiliary, already on scene aiding a victim in the water. Officer Erickson then continued his search for other victims where he observed two subjects in the water, one helping the other. Officer Erickson then removed his gun belt and entered the water to assist in rescuing the subject. Officer Erickson stated that he was in the water approximately 10-15 minutes when he helped place the subject onto the Sarasota County Sheriff Office's Marine Vessel. Officer Erickson could not describe this victim, other than being a male subject who was complaining of leg pain.

After Officer Erickson's completion of the water rescue he re-boarded his patrol boat, which was occupied by Sgt. Jernigan of the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office and Jennifer Zuknick. Officer Erickson heard Zuknick state that she was the passenger of the powerboat when the helicopter crashed into the water in front of them.

Officer Erickson then responded to the powerboat and observed parts of the helicopter stuck in the front portion of the boat. Officer Erickson took photographs of the boat with the parts embedded in the hull. The helicopter parts were then removed from the boat and transported by Officer Erickson to the South Jetty. Once Officer Erickson returned to the South Jetty he advised that he had no further involvement in the incident.

For the complete interview with Officer Erickson refer to the recorded cd-r or the transcription of the interview.

09/11/07 - 1445 hours

I responded to the crash scene with the SSO Marine Unit and the SSO SURF Team in an attempt to collect evidence. The GPS coordinates of our search location, measured in degrees/minutes/seconds, was (N 27 08.753 and W 82 30.006). Among the personnel on board assisting in the search were Deputy Deiter, Dep. Strom, Det. Watson, Sgt. Scully, Sgt. Jernigan, and Sgt. Brewer.

The first dive was conducted by Det. Watson and Dep. Strom. They entered the water at 1452 hours and finished the dive at 1521 hours. Det. Watson advised that they located the engine of the helicopter and part of the undercarriage.

A second dive was then conducted at the same location by Dep. Strom and Sgt. Scully. They entered the water at 1530 hours and finished the dive at 1540 hours. Nothing was located during this search. The entire search team then responded back to the South Jetty.

09/11/07 - 1627 hours

I responded back to the crash scene with the SSO Marine Unit and the SSO SURF Team. The GPS location of this search was conducted at (N 27 08.551 and W 82 29.928). The personnel on board during this search included Deputy Deiter, Dep. Strom, Det. Watson, Sgt. Scully, and Sgt. Osborne.

This dive was conducted by Det. Watson and Sgt. Scully. They entered the water at 1630 hours and finished the dive at 1647 hours. Nothing was located during this search, thus the entire search team responded back to the South Jetty.

09/12/07 - 1630 hours

The recorded interview of Officer Erickson was placed onto a cd-r and submitted into the District Three Property Section as evidence.

Officer Tim R. Erickson #A770

FWC
[REDACTED]

Tampa, FL 33611
[REDACTED]

This concludes my involvement in this case.

RECEIVED

SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

OCT 16 2007

NTSB MIAMI

VICTIM: Mark Allen Watters CASE #: 07-75516
W/M [REDACTED]
5'11" 170 lbs. Unk hair, Unk eyes
[REDACTED]
Pasadena, CA 91107

OFFENSE: Assist Other Agency
STATUS: Exceptionally Cleared - G

DATE TYPED: 09/17/07

PERIOD COVERED UNDER INVESTIGATION: 09/11/07 - 09/14/07

DET.: J. McHenry #1443
mf [REDACTED] 1443

SUPV.: Sgt. M. Brewer #477

Copy to: NTSB
c/o Investigator Jose L. Obregon
8405 N.W. 53rd St, Suite B-103
Miami, FL 33166

Federal Aviation Administration
c/o Investigator Robert Nutt
5601 Mariner Street, Suite 310
Tampa, FL 33609

RELATED CASE(S): N/A

INDEX

DATE/TIME OF OFFENSE: 09/11/07 - 1026 hours

LOCATION OF OFFENSE: 3300 Casey Key Rd.
Nokomis, FL 34275

ADDITIONAL VICTIMS: Mark David Copeland
W/M [REDACTED]
6'0" 274 lbs. Unk hair, Unk eyes
[REDACTED]
Fuquay Varina, NC 27526

Thomas William Newby
W/M [REDACTED]
6'2" 215 lbs. Unk hair, Unk eyes
[REDACTED]
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266-2116

COMPLAINANT:

Robert J. Teague
W/M [REDACTED]
5'11" 260 lbs. Brown hair, Green eyes
[REDACTED]
Valencia, CA 91355
[REDACTED]
Power Boat Magazine

WITNESS/OTHER:

Jennifer Lynn Zuknick
W/F [REDACTED]
5'4" 135 lbs. Blonde hair, Blue eyes
[REDACTED]
Sarasota, FL 34241
[REDACTED]
SMH – RN/Model Power Boat Magazine

John Tomlinson
TNT Custom Marine
[REDACTED]
North Miami, FL 33161
[REDACTED]

Vicki Newton
[REDACTED]

Jill Jeannie Newby
W/F [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266-2116
[REDACTED]

Scott Ryerson
W/M [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Sarasota, FL 34243
[REDACTED]
Suncoast Powerboats
[REDACTED]

Jim Koert
W/M
2070 Andrea Lane
Ft. Myers, FL 33912
[REDACTED]
Suncoast Powerboats
[REDACTED]

National Transportation and Safety Board
Southern Region-Miami Office
Jose Obregon
8405 N.W. 53rd Street, Suite B-103
Miami, FL 33166
[REDACTED]
305-597-4611
305-597-4614

Federal Aviation Administration
Robert Nutt
5601 Mariner Street, Suite 310
Tampa, FL 33609
[REDACTED]

SUSPECT:

N/A

VEHICLE USED IN CRIME:

Helicopter – Bell Ranger 206

Custom boat – 38' Douglas Marine Skater 388

EVIDENCE STATUS:Secured at Coast Guard Reserve Albee Rd.
Station**STOLEN/DAMAGED PROPERTY:**

Helicopter – Bell Ranger 206

Custom boat – 38' Douglas Marine Skater 388

RECOVERED PROPERTY:

Numerous pieces of helicopter

ATTACHMENTS TO REPORT:

Copy of Watters' FAA license and helicopter
certification.
Map of incident and collection location
Property Receipt
Photo copies of items from Mark Watters wallet
Dispatch Background Event Chronology printout

Transcript of 9-1-1 call from Robert Teague
Transcript of 9-1-1 call from 3300 Casey Key Rd.
Transcript of interview with Zuknick
Transcript of interview with Teague
Transcript of interview with Erickson
Property release and shipment request

DRUG RELATED:

No

09/11/07 – 1600 hours

At approximately 1030 hours Sgt. Brewer was contacted by dispatch and was made aware of a possible aircraft crash. The given location was approximately two (2) miles offshore in the 3300 block of Casey Key Rd. Initial reports from dispatch indicated that EMS was staging in the North Jetty parking lot on Casey Key and at the Crow's Nest on the Island of Venice. Efforts were quickly coordinated and Det. Speth #1452 and I started en route to the Crow's Nest, while Det. Brown #1460 and Det. McCoy-Neeley #1140 started en route to the North Jetty parking lot.

Shortly after I arrived I was approached by Dep. McConnell. He informed me that he was patrolling in the 800 Block of Casey Key Rd. when he was waved down by a resident. The resident informed him that he had witnessed a helicopter crash involving a boat approximately one-half mile offshore. Dep. McConnell quickly drove to an area where he could use his binoculars to better identify the location of the crash and relay the information to dispatch.

Detective Speth #1452 and I arrived on scene together at the Crow's Nest, 1968 Tarpon Center Dr., Venice, FL 34293 at 1045 hours. As we arrived, members from the Sarasota County Fire and Rescue, Sarasota Police Department, Venice Police Department, and the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office had already retrieved three occupants from the helicopter. One of the EMS members quickly briefed me, stating that the pilot of the helicopter, Mark Watters, was being Bayflited to Bayfront Memorial. As we were speaking he was informed that one of the victims had been pronounced dead and was being placed in Rescue-52. This person was later identified as Mark Copeland, the videographer. As we spoke, other EMS members continued CPR and were loading a third individual into an ambulance for transport to Venice Regional Medical Hospital. The third person was later identified as Thomas Newby, the still photographer.

James Mattera #516 of SCFD, Station 7, approached me shortly after I was briefed by the first EMS member. Mattera stated that he had been hired as a private contractor by Power Boat Magazine to stand by as part of the emergency rescue crew. According to Mattera he was told to remain at the Hyatt until the helicopter returned to the airport.

What he was to do after that was not made clear by Mattera. He was able to confirm that there were only three people on the helicopter at the time of the crash, and all three had been rescued; these were the three referenced in the previous paragraph. Mattera stated that he believed the female model and boat captain were still out at the crash site, but safely aboard rescue boats.

Through relayed radio traffic I determined that both the boat captain and the model were en route to the collection location at the Crow's Nest. At 1130 hours I began interviewing the model, Jennifer Zuknick. The interview was conducted on the Sheriff's Office Marine 1 boat. Ms. Zuknick said she was hired by Power Boat magazine to ride on the power boat with the boat captain. The boat captain was identified as Robert Teague. Ms. Zuknick explained that she knew the helicopter had taken off from Dolphin Aviation in the morning. Earlier in the morning other boats and one other model had been used, but Ms. Zuknick did not know much about the earlier boat photo sessions. She said she was picked up for her session at the Sarasota Hyatt (1000 Boulevard of the Arts, Sarasota, FL). The exact time was not clear. She said the helicopter had been maneuvering for different photo angles for a while with no visible difficulty. Approximately five (5) minutes before the crash, she and Mr. Teague were cruising at approximately one-hundred (100) miles per hour; Mr. Teague related their approximate speed. One of the occupants of the helicopter signaled them to slow down; the person was later identified as Tom Newby. After being signaled to slow, they slowed to approximately eighty-five (85) miles per hour. Ms. Zuknick related these are only approximates because the GPS (Global Positioning System) was not active. Once they reached the desired speed, the helicopter took a position near the front (bow) of the boat. Ms. Zuknick stated the photographer, later identified as Thomas Newby, was hanging partially out of the helicopter in order to take photos. Ms. Zuknick stated that the helicopter was approximately four to five feet above the water and roughly twenty to twenty-five feet in front of the boat. She indicated her estimates were based on how far the boat's bow was from the water in relation to how far the helicopter was above the boat's bow. Ms. Zuknick explained she watched with admiration as the helicopter held such a close position to the boat and water. She said just as the thought of how skilled the pilot must be to accomplish such a task went through her mind, the helicopter crashed. Ms. Zuknick related that immediately the boat impacted pieces of the helicopter wreckage. She said she watched as a large piece came toward her and Mr. Teague. Ms. Zuknick said she was sure they would be struck and killed, but she and Mr. Teague ducked down. She heard the piece of debris strike the windshield; the impact was strong enough to break the windshield. As quickly as he could, Ms. Zuknick said Mr. Teague maneuvered to a stop. While Mr. Teague phoned 9-1-1, Ms. Zuknick dove off the side of the boat and went to the aid of one of the victim's from the helicopter; this person was later identified as Mark Copeland. Ms. Zuknick related that when she reached Mr. Copeland he was face down in the water. She rolled him over on his back and did her best to rescue swim for both of them. As she supported him in the water, Mr. Copeland was complaining about his injuries. Ms. Zuknick said initially she found a strong pulse on Mr. Copeland. Slowly he became less active and then non-responsive. When she realized he needed assistance to breathe, Ms. Zuknick said she did her best

to position herself to perform rescue breathing. When she did attempt to breath for Mr. Copeland, she explained there was breathing resistance. Ms. Zuknick said she continually reassured Mr. Copeland, wiped the foam away regularly, and kissed him on the cheek. She believed the first boat to arrive and offer assistance was a Coast Guard vessel. The people on board tried, unsuccessfully, to lift Mr. Copeland onto the vessel. They lowered him back to water level and Ms. Zuknick continued to assist with support. Marine 1 arrived and immediately offered assistance and successfully brought Mr. Copeland on board.

At the end of the interview Ms. Zuknick expressed concern about her family and boyfriend hearing about the incident, and wanted to prevent their worrying. I offered her my phone and she placed two calls; one to her boyfriend and other to her mother. In both cases she left messages and they later returned her call. Ms. Zuknick expressed that the spilled fuel from the helicopter was beginning to irritate her skin and causing a burning sensation. Sgt. Jernigan made arrangements with the Crow's Nest for Ms. Zuknick to use their shower and wash off some of the fuel.

After offering Sgt. Brewer a brief summary of the interview with Ms. Zuknick, I was instructed to complete an interview with the boat captain, Thomas Teague. Prior to my interview, Det. Speth #1452 and FWC Investigator Gregory completed their interviews. FWC Investigator Gregory informed me that, based on his interview, he believed the incident was going to be a NTSB and FAA issue. He believed this was a case of the boat striking the helicopter after it crashed, and not a matter of the boat causing or being directly related to the cause of the crash.

After speaking with FWC Investigator Gregory, Mr. Teague advised the photo shoot was coordinated by Power Boat magazine. He related that he was their chief boat captain. Mr. Teague was familiar with the helicopter pilot, later identified as Mark Watters, and the still photographer, later identified as Thomas Newby, because they had worked together on previous photo shoots. Mr. Teague said they were on the final run of the day after photographing and filming five other boats. He said he drove boats one (1), three (3), and number six (6), the final boat. The first launch was at approximately 0800 hours and Mr. Teague stated the helicopter had been in the air from 0800 hours until the crash at 1000 hours. No prior indications of trouble with the helicopter, or its flight existed in the other runs of the day. Earlier in the day they had been using a different model, so prior to the start of the last run Mr. Teague said he went to the Hyatt to pick up Ms. Zuknick, and left the Hyatt between 0930 and 0945 hours. After idling through the New Pass Bridge area, the helicopter rejoined them. He said they cleared the buoys and headed out into the Gulf of Mexico approximately ten (10) miles. Then they headed south approximately another ten miles, and finally east toward the coast line. In a second recount Mr. Teague stated the run was approximately seventeen miles long and that they went approximately three miles out before heading south and eventually toward the coast. As they neared the coast the photographer indicated through hand signals that they wanted a "front lit, front shot", which requires the helicopter to be in front of the boat with the boat driving into the sun. He said the helicopter was leading

the boat by approximately one-hundred (100) to one-hundred and fifty (150) yards, and two boat widths to the left. He recalled that Thomas Newby was leaning out of the right side of the helicopter facing the boat; the doors were removed from the helicopter prior to flight that day. Mr. Copeland was in the rear left seat. Mr. Newby continued to give Mr. Teague hand signals to maneuver into position. Mr. Newby, the photographer, had just given Mr. Teague the "OK" hand signal. He said the boat was running at approximately 4300 RPMS, which he believed was roughly eighty to eighty-five (80-85) miles per hour. At this point the helicopter-to-boat orientation had not changed and the helicopter was between seven (7) and ten (10) feet off the water. Mr. Teague said with no warning, and without a visible cause the helicopter crashed in front of them. He said the front of the helicopter's right (pilot side) skid touched the water first. Mr. Teague stated that it was not the skid in total that made contact first, but the radius near the front of the skid. Just as Ms. Zuknick had recalled, Mr. Teague stated the swells in the water were no greater than two feet and it did not appear as though a swell made contact with the helicopter. As the helicopter "cartwheeled" it sprayed water and debris in the air. Mr. Teague said he could not distinguish which parts of the helicopter hit the boat's windshield, but he saw the debris flying and ducked down to avoid injury. As soon as the helicopter crashed, Mr. Teague stated he maneuvered the boat to a stop and dialed 9-1-1. According to the timer on his cell phone, the call was placed exactly at 1000 hours and lasted thirty-eight (38) seconds. He said as he was making the call, Ms. Zuknick dove off the port side of the boat into the debris and fuel, toward the person now identified as Mark Copeland. After placing the call, he said he dove off the starboard side of the boat toward Mr. Newby who was face down in the water, and Mark Watters, the pilot. When he reached Mr. Newby, he was unconscious so Mr. Teague began to yell at him. Mr. Teague stated the pilot, Mark Watters, was conscious and could see he was trying to wake Mr. Newby, so he began yelling to Mr. Newby, too. Mr. Teague said he was able to get Mr. Watters onto a piece of the floating debris and then return to Mr. Newby. While in the water, Mr. Teague said he performed CPR on Mr. Newby.

Ms. Zuknick was caring for Mr. Copeland between fifty (50) and one-hundred (100) yards away. During their wait for rescue, Mr. Watters asked Mr. Teague what had happened. Mr. Teague told the pilot he did not know what had gone wrong.

Approximately twenty minutes had passed when a helicopter flew over briefly; he believed it was the Sheriff's Office helicopter. Within minutes the helicopter returned with a rescue swimmer, Sgt. Jernigan, to render aid in the water. Other rescue vessels arrived shortly after to render aid as well. The first person to actually be pulled from the water was the pilot, Mark Watters. By the time they were rescued, Mr. Teague stated they had drifted to the north and Mr. Watters was to the south still floating on aircraft debris when he was rescued by one of the EMS vessels.

During the interview with Thomas Teague, he indicated that the owner of TNT Custom Marine, John Tomlinson, was the captain of the other boats earlier in the morning. Because Mr. Tomlinson was busy assisting family and friends of the victims at Venice

Regional Medical Hospital, I could not meet with him in person. Via cell phone Mr. Tomlinson related that the helicopter seemed to be operating fine during the earlier sessions. To his knowledge there were no indications that the pilot or helicopter was experiencing difficulties.

By the time I concluded my interviews, Lt. Quinn and Sgt. Brewer were coordinating efforts with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Nation Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), and the Sheriff's Office Forensics units. It was related to me that when representatives from the FAA and NTSB arrived they would be assuming the lead in the investigation and we would support them as requested. Because of their greater access to particular records and their role as lead, all background and licensing checks will be the responsibility of the FAA and NTSB.

Forensic units arrived at approximately 1220, and Det. Brown and Det. McCoy-Neeley worked with Forensics to recover and secure evidence. Robert Nutt and a fellow investigator arrived from the FAA at approximately 1330 hours. Det. McCoy-Neeley also contacted the Medical Examiner's Office and made them aware of the incident.

At 1421 hours, Jose Obregon of the NTSB contacted Lt. Quinn and informed him he was en route from the Miami office. At 1450 hours, I cleared the scene returned to the District Three office before he arrived, but I was informed by Lt. Quinn that Investigator Obregon arrived at approximately 1645. As items from the crash were recovered, they were transported and secured at the Coast Guard Reserve Albee Road Station.

It had been previously explained to me that Thomas Newby was from Manhattan Beach California, and that he was here with his girlfriend, Vicki, for the photo shoot. Hospital staff indicated to Sgt. Brewer that no immediate family for Mr. Newby could be established, other than his former wife and juvenile children. Sgt. Brewer indicated that we needed to assure next of kin contact and he added that he believed Vicki had already made a death notification; Vicki's last name was not known. When I contacted the hospital to obtain the correct spelling and date of birth for Mr. Newby, they could not provide any of the information. They offered only that his name was Tom Newby, and had the name was misspelled as "Neuby." Initially one of the civilian investigators was able to assist me with a possible identification. Investigator Corbett was able to provide further background information for verification. Using a cell phone number obtained from the hospital staff, I was able to make contact with Thomas Newby's former wife, Jill, in California. She explained that she had already been delivered the news of Mr. Newby's death and offered that Vicki's last name was Newton. During the same phone conversation, she told me that Vicki Newton would be her onsite liaison, and would be assisting in the return of Mr. Newby's personal items. Together they were going to work with the Medical Examiner's Office to make final arrangements.

09/12/07 – 0600 hours

In a phone conversation with Supervisor Sherry Williams in our Central Dispatch Center, I requested a copy of the incoming 9-1-1 calls pertaining to this case. She said she would have a copy of the calls made and send them in the inter-office mail as soon as possible.

09/12/07 – 1000 hours

The day of the incident EMS crews had obtained the names of those involved and passed them on to responding agencies. Because some of the information was still in doubt I asked for the assistance of Investigator Corbett. He was able to develop the proper spellings of names, addresses, and dates of birth for some of the witnesses and victims.

09/12/07 - 1430 hours

Det. Brown #1460 went out with the recovery vessels on September 11, 2007 and recorded the GPS coordinates above where the motor was marked for recovery. Using Google Earth I entered the GPS coordinates. Google Earth converted these numbers to a nationally accepted standard format of 27.145883 North by -82.5001 West. On the attached map, these coordinates are represented by a yellow pushpin, and the label Incident Location. The map also displays the EMS collection point at 1968 Tarpon Center Drive (The Crow's Nest) in Venice. The third location on the map is merely a reference point, showing the location in correlation to a Casey Key Road address.

As requested, the Forensics department created two photo CD's documenting property and evidence recovered immediately after the crash. They also provided photo documentation of the decedents' external injuries.

Det. Klay #1145 contacted Dolphin Aviation and determined that a rental car containing the personal property of the victims was in their parking lot. He was also informed that the doors to the helicopter also appeared to be in the vehicle. Det. Klay stated that earlier in the day he had been working with the Hyatt and Gregg Mannsfield of Power Boat Magazine to secure personal property of the victims left at the Hyatt. Because he was already involved in the collection and return of those items, he volunteered to secure and transport the helicopter doors to the collection site at the Coast Guard Reserve Station. Those items were received by NTBS Investigator Obregon.

09/13/07 – 1100 hours

Investigator Andrus of the District 12, Medical Examiner's Office informed me that the autopsies had been completed on Mr. Newby and Mr. Copeland. Investigator Andrus explained that both men had severe trauma to several areas of the body including broken bones. Mr. Copeland's most serious injury appeared to be a broken neck, which

caused damage to the spinal cord. The examining doctor felt the injury was serious enough to be "rapidly fatal." Mr. Newby sustained multiple injuries as well, including breaks to the neck and back. Additionally, Mr. Newby had been previously fitted with an internal defibrillator, and information download from the instrument indicated a heart attack in the same time frame as the crash. The data had not been analyzed completely, so the Medical Examiner could not determine if this was a contributing cause of death.

09/14/07 – 0915 hours

Det. Klay received a bio-bag from Property. The bag contained pieces of clothing from the pilot, Mark Watters. Det. Klay documented money found in the wallet. Mr. Watters' helicopter certification card and pilot's license was located in the wallet as well. I contacted NTSB Investigator Obregon to determine if he needed these items secured. He advised that a copy of the items was sufficient. When the items are dry enough, copies will be made and included as an attachment of this report.

Based on interviews conducted with Robert Teague, chief test pilot and technical editor for Power Boat Magazine, and the model Jennifer Zuknick, the following version of events have been determined. At approximately 0800 hours helicopter pilot, Mark Watters, still photographer, Thomas Newby, and videographer Mark Copeland took off in a Bell Ranger 206, from Dolphin Aviation in Sarasota. The purpose of the flight was to photograph several boats in action on the water for Power Boat Magazine. The helicopter rendezvoused with the first boat captained by Robert Teague, and began photographing. When the photography of the first boat was completed, a second boat piloted by John Tomlinson, of TNT Custom Marine of Miami, Florida began its session. The photography and captaining of the boats continued in this alternating fashion until they reached the final boat captained by Robert Teague. During the transitions the helicopter remained in the air. Mr. Teague stated that he had just finished dropping the first of the two models off at the Quay's (Sarasota Hyatt) waterside dock at approximately 0930 hours. By 0945 hours, he was headed back to the Gulf of Mexico with model Jennifer Zuknick, in a red, pin-striped, custom 38' Douglas Marine Skater 388. As they neared the New Pass Bridge they were rejoined by the helicopter. Mr. Teague said that they took a rough westward heading, and after several miles they turned in an approximate southern direction and continued for several miles more before heading back to the coast. Because the GPS on the boat was not active, Mr. Teague could only provide estimates on headings and speeds. He also indicated communication between the boat and helicopter was conducted via hand signals. As they neared the coastline, photographer Thomas Newby indicated, using hand signals, that they wanted to set up a "front lit, front shot." Mr. Newby signaled for Mr. Teague to slow the speed of the boat to 85 MPH. In order to achieve this, the desired photo, helicopter pilot Mark Watters led the boat into the direction of the sun and the boat trailed behind. Once the desired position and speed were met Mr. Newby flashed the "O.K." hand sign. Ms. Zuknick and Mr. Teague agree that the helicopter was less than twelve feet off the water as they continued on this course. Mr. Teague estimated that

the helicopter was approximately two boat widths to the left and flying at a slight left to right angle. The doors had been removed from the helicopter pre-flight. Mr. Teague said the angled flight was necessary because the pilot and Mr. Newby were on the right side of the helicopter; Mr. Copeland was in the rear left position. Mr. Newby could only achieve the desired photography angle by leaning out of the helicopter; he described this as standard practice Mr. Newby had used in the past. Ms. Zuknick stated that she was in awe of pilot Mark Watters' skills as he traveled close to the boat and water. Both, Mr. Teague and Ms. Zuknick, stated that without warning the helicopter's right skid touched the water and it crashed. Mr. Teague stated he watched as the radius of the skid touched the water and then the helicopter began to "cartwheel" spraying water and debris in the air. Pieces of the helicopter wreckage struck the boat, damaging the hull and cracking the windshield. After bringing the boat to a stop as quickly as he could, Mr. Teague phoned 9-1-1. The Central Dispatch Center received the first emergency call at 1004, and immediately dispatched EMS and the Sheriff's Office. As he made the call, Ms. Zuknick dove off the port side of the boat and swam to Mr. Copeland's aid. Mr. Teague then jumped off the starboard side of the boat and swam to the aid of Mr. Newby and Mr. Watters. Mr. Watters was conscious and asking Mr. Teague what had happened. Mr. Watters was assisted onto a piece of floating debris, and Mr. Teague remained with the unconscious Mr. Newby until rescue boats arrived. Sarasota County Sheriff's Office – Air1 was the first to reach the crash sight followed by other rescue boats. It was decided that the Crow's Nest in Venice was the best collection point and the victims were transported there for relay to ground and air vehicles for further transport to hospitals. Mr. Copeland was pronounced dead dockside, and Mr. Newby was transported to Venice Regional Medical Hospital where he was pronounced dead at approximately 1115 hours. The pilot, Mark Watters, was air lifted to Bayfront Memorial Trauma Center, where he underwent surgery and was alive at the time of this writing. The Sheriff's Office assumed control of the scene until investigators from the FAA and the NTSB arrived. Upon their arrival they took control of the investigation and the Sheriff's Office offered its resources and assisted the investigation in a support role. A complete packet including reports, supplements, recordings, and interview transcripts will be forwarded to the FAA and NTSB investigators. At the time of this writing no crime, no charges, or specific cause for the crash had been determined.